



The orodental healthcare based on Islamic Traditions (Hadith)

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ABSTRACT

Human health enjoys high position in Islamic guidelines. Quran has been introduced as book of guidance and healthcare. Accordingly, several healthcare guidelines have been proposed in Islamic texts. One of the Islamic teachings regarding health is the Islamic recommendations about orodental healthcare. The present research is intended to identify dimensions of guidelines of orodental healthcare with focus on Islamic medical- narrative teachings. Current research is based on analytical- documentary and conceptual method. In this course, primarily the Islamic Hadith (narrative traditions) about orodental healthcare were identified with referring to national data bank including Magiran, Hawzeh.net, Noormag, Jaame-al- Hadith, Jaame-al-Tafsir, Ahlebit Library, and Teb Library. After omission of Invalid narratives and discovery of authenticated and reliable narratives, various dimensions and axes of orodental healthcare were analyzed. Study on texts may indicate Islamic medical Hadith and narratives include some topics such as quality and customs of healthcare, clean nutrition and diet, intellectual intervention, and also orientation of spiritual and physical health in guidelines of orodental healthcare and these are some teachings that may be efficient toward improving healthcare in Muslim Communities.

Keywords: Care, Health, Islamic narratives, Orodental health

INTRODUCTION

Human's mouth is called second heart and it is directly involved in beauty, speaking, vital functions, and human's health to the extent that it is said that a half of human's beauty depends on his/ her face and out of which two-third is related to mouth and teeth [1]. Observance of orodental healthcare and its role in individual health is an undeniable subject. In addition to preparation of food for digestion in stomach, mouth also plays efficient role in physical beauty, expression of letters and regulation of voices. Various orodental diseases cause disorder in natural order of body that is led to creating pain and disease in other organs as well. Based on the conducted studies during recent years, the relationship between diseases in other organs with orodental diseases has been proved [2] Non-observance of orodental healthcare at suitable time may cause destruction and decayin dental enamel [3]. Preservation and protection from orodental healthcare is one of topics, which have been dealt with for very long times ago. Islamic school is one of the sources in which this important subject has been addressed well and clearly. Islam appeared as a religion in the seventh century when the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him began receiving revelations from (God). Shi'ah and Sunni are two branches of Islam. Shi'ah, which means literally follower, refers to those who consider the succession to the Prophet-may God's peace and benediction be upon him to be the special right of the family of the Prophet and who in the field of the Islamic sciences and culture follow the

school of the Household of the Prophet[4], Quran and narrations, (sayings, deeds, or agreements of the Holy prophet Mohammad and his successions (Household of the Prophet) are as sources of Islamic teachings (shia'h branch.).

Looking at Islamic texts indicates that protection from health is deemed as highly important in Islam to the extent that Islamic Prophet has assumed medical sciences as an ally for religious knowledge [5]. In Unitarian Ideology, anything, including body and organs and limbs, that put at our disposal will be assumed as divine deposit [6]. In Holy Quran, God has deemed protection from one's own healthcare as one of characteristics of group of God-believers ([7], 32:70). In Islamic perspective, the importance of protection and care for body is to the extent that whenever health of body in a devoted Muslim is threatened, the forbidden object (Haram) may be changed into advisable one or Halal may be turned into forbidden object and religious injunctions may be modified in order to protect and conserve health. For this reason, the religious rule of '*All of hazardous objects are forbidden/ Haram*' is employed for interpretation of religious forbidden and advisable objects [8] Thus, many guidelines have been mentioned about health to the extent that Gods introduces his scripture as *Book of Health* in Holy Quran ([7], 16:5). So, there are much guidance on health, in Hadiths (narrations), as far as one of Islamic thinkers said: the infallible Imams (narrations) is the only way to achieve health [9].

One of Islamic guidelines regarding health and protection in narrative medical teachings is related to orodental healthcare. Review on Islamic texts signifies that although it has not been directly mentioned about orodental healthcare in Holy Quran, in texts of Hadith and Islamic traditions, the subject of orodental healthcare has been highly emphasized. In Islamic traditions and narratives, the mouth has been introduced as path of beading of God-prayer and recital of Quran [10] and also as one of ways to approach to God [11]. In an Islamic tradition, it was narrated from Imam Sadegh: 'Teeth are creatures of God and they are tools for chewing and cause of tendency to food' [12]. Paying attention to oral healthcare is deemed as one of the guest's rights in respective of host.

As it mentioned in Islamic narratives, one of guest's rights in relation to the host is that the host is required to provide the tools for cleaning mouth and teeth of guest [13]. In this regard, Islam has recommended to any action to provide health for teeth and mouth and forbidden from anything that may threaten health of teeth [14].

Despite of multiple Islamic sources regarding observance of orodental hygiene, no comprehensive research has been yet published about this subject. In addition, the religion and spirituality are some important part of human life and the effect of religion and spirituality is extended to all dimensions of individual and social life of human.

One of the effective dimensions of religion and spirituality is the impact of religious guidelines on healthcare field. Whereas Islamic religion includes several teachings about the health and on the other hand the Muslim communities are affected by Islamic teachings thus it necessitates for perceiving and extracting Islamic guidelines about orodental healthcare for empowerment of Muslim Communities to improve health. Therefore, authors of this article tended to extract Islamic medicine strategies about orodental healthcare by review of Islamic medical narratives in Shie'h branch.

METHODOLOGY

In this regard, the related data were collected using keywords including oral health, dental health, Islam and oral health, Islam and body, teeth and Islam in national information banks such as Magiran, Hawzeh.net, Noormag, Jaame-al-Hadith, Jaame-al-Tafsir, Ahlebit Library, and Teb Library. After extraction of medical narratives about mouth and teeth, according to authenticity and weakness, these narratives were explored according to data from Derayat-al-Noor software from Islamic Sciences Computerized Researches Center. The narratives with invalid documentation about orodental healthcare were excluded from this study. The authenticated and reliable Hadith and narratives relating to orodental healthcare were extracted with study on Islamic essays and texts. After review on Islamic narratives regarding protection and orodental healthcare, some Hadith and narratives were identified under titles such as Islam and orodental healthcare, presentation of several solutions in health as well as orientation physical and spiritual health in care for mouth and teeth.

RESULTS

1. Quality and customs of orodental healthcare

The review on narrative texts suggests that tooth-brushing is deemed as the foremost strategy in care for orodental healthcare. It was narrated from Holy Prophet (PBUH) that he expressed: 'Gabriel constantly recommended me for tooth-brushing so I continued to tooth-brushing as long as I was afraid that my gums and teeth might be damaged and or my teeth might be removed' [10]. Tooth-brushing is considered as commendable Islamic rite where in some special cases such as before performing ablution, before prayer, upon recital of Quran, at time of twilight and before Midnight Prayer, upon getting up, after any diet particularly after eating breakfast and after dinner, tooth-brushing has been highly advised [15]. Using plant species of *Salvadora persica* and especially its root has been extremely recommended upon days of emerging Islam and during life period of Islamic Prophet. It has been mentioned various narratives that Holy Prophet and other Imams (PBUT) brushed their teeth by means of the root of a plant similar to a smooth wood with a lot of fibers and very beneficent contents and recommended them their surrounding people and their followers to it to great extent. It has been mentioned in Book of Imam Reza Medicine that 'You should know that the *Salvadora persica* wood is the best tool used for brushing teeth. It is also called tree skin' [16]. In this Hadith, means brushing wood that is called Persica. In this sense, it has been referred to use of olive tree wood and also prevention from employing pomegranate wood in some of narratives [17]. In addition to tooth-brush, it has been advised about width of teeth where it has been quoted from God Prophet in a narrative: "Brush width of your teeth (from bottom to top) and longitudinally" [12].

Brushing of teeth has been assumed as unfavorable in unsuitable places such as toilet and bathroom in Islamic narratives since it is followed by dental diseases and bad breath [10].

Perhaps, toothpick is the oldest tool that human has used in for oral healthcare. The toothpick is a piece of wood extracted from a tree thereby what it has left between teeth, exists from this area. Holy Prophet implied: "Use toothpick because this causes cleaning and hygiene for teeth and acts as a sign of believing in God." In addition using toothpick keeps the gums and teeth healthy along them [18-19].

2. Purified nutrition

Approach of paying attention to purified (good) nutrition is one of the Islamic guidelines for healthcare. As God emphasizes in Holy Quran: "they ask thee what is lawful to them (as food), Say: lawful unto you are (all) things good and pure ([7], 5:4).

The purified nutrition is called to a food that complies with humor of healthy human. In the opposite point, the filthy food is what the human's taste and nature repels it [20]. The nature means that the consuming goods should be free of any filthy and or inflicted by unclean objects [21].

Thus, Purified food is a type of food that has been served by clean materials and free of any type of contamination in such a way that to provide human's health in addition to satiate the hunger. The review on some of Islamic medical narratives suggest that paying attention to appropriate nutrition (dietary) habits is one of the other Islamic strategies in orodental healthcare. Some of Islamic narratives imply the benefits and advantages of certain foods in relation to orodental healthcare. Those narratives, which refer to nutritional properties and benefits, include the narratives which are used and followed by well-smelling of mouth and teeth. Imam Sadegh expressed: 'Cheese makes good smelling in mouth. Raisin, pomegranate, and apple cause good-smell in mouth and alleviate the pain there' [19]. Some of Islamic traditions (Hadith) refer to harmful foods for orodental health. Imam Reza (PBUH) implied: 'Drinking cool water after hot water and confections destroy teeth. Anyone who likes his/her teeth not to be decayed even after eating confections then s/he should eat a piece of bread after them as well' [22]. In addition, some of nutrition-related narratives refer to therapy for some of dental disease. Such a narrative implies that using colocynth oil (a plant in desert similar to watermelon with a fruit in size of olive seed) for treatment of dental pain [23].

3. Spiritual interventions

Many studies suggest that there is positive significant relationship among spirituality and health (24). Recital of Quran and seeking for blessing and refuge from it is effective on physical health in Islamic teaching [25-26]. Similarly, using prayer to cope with diseases is emphasized in Islamic texts. As God express in Quran: '...Call upon Me, I will answer you...' [7]. Therefore, divine prophets performed prayer before God upon incidence of disease [7]. Investigation into Islamic narratives signifies that recital of praying and beading and recital of Quran has been

recommended to God-believers to cope with dental pains. For instance, it has been quoted from a narrative that if someone complains from dental pain it is better to him/ her to recite this Quranic verse: *'And He it is Who made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts; little is it that you give thanks'*[23]. Similarly, in another narrative Imam Sadegh (PBUH) expresses: *'Recite this god's beading upon incidence of dental pain: In the name of merciful God, in the name of curer God, in the name All-Sufficing God, there is no power and no strength save in God, the All-High, the All-Mighty; all power and might are from God, the exalted, the great'* [23]. It is obvious that the above measures may not meet all the needs for a Muslim from referring to physician and such types of praying and beadings will be followed by reassuring and curing effect on dental pains and other pains if they have been read along with pure faith and belief in God.

4. Physical health and orodental healthcare

Physical body possesses dignity and value in Islamic teaching since it is deemed as a tool and platform to move toward perfection of soul [27]. God has praised enjoying physical fitness in Quran ([7], 28:16). From perspective of Islamic texts, commitment to religious instructions in orodental healthcare will be followed by physical health. Based on a narrative quoted from a Pure Imam (PBUH), orodental healthcare is followed by prevention from oral bad breath [10]. Bad breath or halitosis is a type of unpleasant smell resulting from exhalation in a person and is deemed as important symptoms of disease. Imam Reza (PBUH) implies: *'tooth- brushing creates visual acuity and removes eye- discharge and it is led to increase human's intelligence.'* In addition, it alleviates yellow color from teeth and strengthens gums, and removes phlegm and increases appetite to food. It makes pain and sorrow far away from human and guarantees health for stomach with helping to this organ [12]. Likewise, commitment to rinse water in mouth before performing ablution (flushing mouth with water) and nasal inhalation of water causes the germs to be removed from respiratory duct and to clean it [28]. Paying attention to nutritional approaches in Islamic narratives is led to strengthening of gum and consolidation of teeth. As it implied in a narrative, vinegar strengthens the gums and chewing of turpentine extract and mastic is led to strengthening of teeth [22].

Spiritual health and orodental healthcare

One of the important dimensions in formation of human's health is his/her spirituality dimension. Spirituality or soul exaltation is realized under the aegis of divine proximity in Islamic teachings. Spiritual health means benefitting from rational faculty and human tendencies and potentials that provide the exercise recognition from origin of existence, god-worshiping, god- seeking, humiliation, submission, and trust in Him in such a way that all of them to appear in actions and behaviors of human [29]. In the course of realizing spiritual health, orodental healthcare is assumed as type of moral and praying activity. In narrative texts, tooth- brushing habits have been considered as divine gifts and bounties to prophets, traditions of divine apostles, ethics of prophets, well- morality, and of advisable good tradition [10]. Tooth- brushing is so important that in some Islamic narratives it has been emphasized in its preference and advisable nature and leaving it is assumed as unpleasant [10].

From viewpoint of Pure Imams (PBUT), tooth- brushing will be followed by God's satisfaction and consent [30]. Protection from orodental healthcare causes increase in spiritual reward of prayer. As it quoted from Imam Sadegh (PBUH) in a narrative, *'Two units of prayer after washing and tooth- brushing are better than seventy units of prayer without brushing'* [10]. The individual's desires and wishes are fulfilled in this world with tooth- brushing and his/her preoccupations will be removed. It is followed by salvation and redemption in another world because God will reckon his/her account in resurrection day easily and opens mercy window toward him/ her [30].

CONCLUSION

Protection and healthcare of mouth and teeth is one of the topics, which have been dealt with from the very beginning period of time. Islamic sacred religion has especially noticed orodental healthcare. The strategies for orodental healthcare were explored in Islamic teachings in this study. The findings signify that Islamic narrative teachings mainly emphasized in prevention from orodental diseases. The disease prophylactic process is followed by various strategies. Some of Islamic guidelines are focused on tooth- brushing, using of toothpick, and suitable nutrition that complies with scientific findings about them. Accordingly, World Health Organization (WHO) assumed using the given teeth brush in Islamic narrative text that plays important and guaranteed role in improvement of orodental healthcare [31].

The other point in Islamic medical narratives is to focus on relationship among orodental healthcare with other health dimensions. Although with review on Islamic texts it has been referred to various uses of oral care in physical

dimension such as improving vision, increase in intelligence, and proper function of stomach and preservation of its health, the foremost distinctive aspect of Islamic narrative medicine in orodental healthcare is the emphasis on spiritual nature of orodental healthcare as well as its impact on improving spiritual health dimension. To notice spiritual dimension, the narrative guidelines emphasize that the orodental healthcare task is a religious and ethical action. It is an action that is followed by god's pleasure, human everlasting salvation, increase in subsistence and nourishment both in this world and resurrection day doe God-believer human. The above findings indicate that totality of approach toward health in Islamic guidelines is even followed regarding orodental healthcare. Whereas several Hadith (narratives) signify the high scientific position of holy prophet and Imams (PBUT) not only in medicine but also in varieties of knowledge [32] and this teaching affects in life of religious devotees thus it is duly to pay attention to narrative medical guidelines (Hadith) to improve health in Muslim Communities as well.

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